11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

567 men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters."[18] Nevertheless, most planters insisted that their slaves give up their African customs of polygamy and accept the Christian standard of monogamy as the rule of their family life.

567 177 584 St. Helena planters quite generally required their slaves to choose a mate for life, and they attempted to impress the solemnity of the marriage upon the contracting parties by the observance of a ceremony. The engagement of a slave couple was formally recognized on the plantation when the black man asked the master's permission to marry, designating specifically the chosen girl. Many owners encouraged their men to choose from among the girls of their own plantations, but they did not always insist upon it.[19] A man might select his wife from another plantation on the Island, but if he did so he must suffer the inconveniences of not having a woman to look after his clothes, grind his corn into grits, and cook his meals. On the other hand, a wife on a neighboring plantation gave the husband an excuse for leaving his own plantation frequently.

567 585 177 Upon gaining permission to marry, the couple might request that the ceremony be performed at once, whereupon the planter, if without too many religious scruples, might informally "pronounce" them man and wife. The master was more likely to insist, however, upon a marriage by a white preacher or by one of the religious leaders

[18] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 216.

[19] Mr. J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, possesses today a bill of sale for a Negro girl his father paid $1,200 for in order that one of his slaves might have the wife he loved.